Dry rice may be grown in the plains, but is generally cultivated in mountain rais, for the peoples who consume it are settled in the highlands. Indeed, the Khas are the ones who mainly practice its cultivation. The ratio of total dry rice production to that of glutinous rice is about one to four.

It is difficult to give any official figures, even approximate ones --for the reasons given above--regarding the total quantity of rice, whether the year be a good or bad one, which Laos produces. It differs, moreover, from one year to the next because of meteorological variations and also because of the damaging epizootic diseases which recur periodically, decimating the farming animals and forcing the inhabitants to reduce the area of their plantings.

[355] One can, however, given the amount necessary for the subsistence of a family of five, deduce the approximate weight of rice which is indispensable for feeding any given group of people.

It is estimated that the average yearly consumption by a family of five is 28 piculs of paddy (1,700 kilograms), which yield about 17 piculs of threshed rice (1,026 kilograms).

Now the total population of Laos, which is estimated at 470,000, will normally contain 94,000 families of five, or groupings of five individuals of all ages and both sexes. On this basis it is easy to calculate that the amount of paddy needed to feed these 94,000 groups will be 2,632,000 piculs (159,800,000 kilograms) of paddy and 1,598,000 piculs (96,440,000 kilograms) of threshed rice.

In addition to this indispensable minimum merely for feeding the inhabitants, other quantities of rice are also necessary: 1) For fodder for certain animals and for making alcohol, pastry, etc., a consumption figure which we estimate at one-fifth of the above figure, or 526,400 piculs of paddy (31,794,560 kilograms) or 319,600 piculs of threshed rice (19,308,840 kilograms); 2) For seed and emergency reserves. These latter may be calculated at the rate of 5 piculs of paddy per house or per family of five, and require about 600,000 piculs of paddy (36,240,000 kilograms).

In recapitulation, it is clear that the amount of paddy which Laos ought to produce for food for its inhabitants, fodder for certain animals, the manufacture of alcohol, miscellaneous uses, seed and reserves is some 3,758,000 to 3,800,000 piculs or 226,983 to 229,520 tons, giving an average ratio of 1) 485 kilograms or 8 piculs of paddy per inhabitant; or 2) 2,425 kilograms or 40 piculs per family.